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Speeches/Documents

**Title: On the Guomindang's different answers to the question of responsibility for the war**

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"After the conclusion of the War of Resistance, the Government, following a policy of peace and national reconstruction, endeavoured to solve peacefully the problem of the Communist Party of China. For a period of a year and a half the Communist Party of China broke every agreement and therefore it should bear the responsibility for wrecking peace. Instead, it has now drawn up a list of so-called war criminals which includes all the Government leaders and has even demanded that the Government first arrest them; this clearly shows how truculent and unreasonable the Communist Party is. Unless the Communist Party of China changes this behaviour, it will indeed be difficult to find a way to peace negotiations."

The above is the entire argument on the question of the responsibility for the war which the Propaganda Department of the Central Executive Committee of the Kuomintang advanced in a "Special Directive for Propaganda", issued on February 13, 1949.

It is the argument of none other than War Criminal No. 1, Chiang Kai-shek. In his New Year's Day statement he said:

As a devoted adherent of the Three People's Principles and the teachings of the Father of the Republic, I was reluctant to follow the conclusion of the war against Japan with the armed suppression of the bandits and thereby to aggravate the sufferings of the people. Therefore, as soon as the War of Resistance came to an end, our Government proclaimed its policy of peace and national reconstruction and moreover sought to solve the Communist problem by means of political consultation and military mediation. But contrary to our expectations, the Communist Party for a period of a year and a half wilfully obstructed all agreements and proposals and made it impossible to carry them out by the measures which were originally intended. Finally, it even started an all-out armed rebellion which threatened the very existence of the state. This Government was thus driven to the painful necessity of mobilization to put down the rebellion.

On December 25, 1948, seven days before Chiang Kai-shek made this statement, an authoritative person in the Communist Party of China put forward a list of forty-three war criminals and illustrious at the head of the list was none other than this same Chiang Kai-shek. The war criminals, who want both to sue for peace and to shirk their responsibility, have no alternative but to shift the blame onto the Communist Party. But the two are irreconcilable. Since the Communist Party should bear the responsibility for launching the war, then the Communist Party should be punished. Since the Communists are "bandits", then the "bandits"

should be "suppressed". Since they "started an all-out armed rebellion", then the "rebellion" should be "put down". "Bandit suppression" and "the putting down of rebellion" are a hundred per cent right, so why should they be abandoned? Why has the term "Communist bandits" been changed into "Communist Party" in all Kuomintang public documents issued since January 1, 1949?

Sun Fo, feeling that something was amiss, put forward a different argument about the responsibility for the war in a speech broadcast on the evening of the same day Chiang Kai-shek issued his New Year's Day statement. Sun Fo said:

We remember that in the early period following the victory of the War of Resistance, three years ago, because the people needed rehabilitation, the country needed active reconstruction and there was still common understanding of these needs among the various parties, we called together representatives from various quarters and public personages for a Political Consultative Conference. After three weeks' effort and thanks especially to the kind mediation of Mr. Marshall, President Truman's special envoy, we agreed upon a programme for peace and national reconstruction and upon specific measures for settling various disputes. If we had then carried out all these measures in good time, just think how prosperous China would be today, and how happy her people would be! Unfortunately, at the time none of the various parties concerned would entirely forgo its selfish interests, the people throughout the country did not exert themselves to the utmost to promote the success of the peace movement, and so the disaster of war again occurred, plunging the people into misery and suffering.

Sun Fo is a little bit more "fair" than Chiang Kai-shek. You see, unlike Chiang Kai-shek, he does not shift the responsibility for the war entirely onto the Communist Party, but divides the blame equally among "the various parties concerned" by the method of "equalization of landownership".<sup>[1]</sup> Those involved are the Kuomintang, also the Communist Party, also the Democratic League and also the public personages. That isn't all; "the people throughout the country" are also involved; not one of our 475 million fellow-countrymen can escape responsibility. While Chiang Kai-shek caned the Communist Party alone, Sun Fo canes all the parties, all the people without party affiliation, every one of his fellow-countrymen; even Chiang Kai-shek, and perhaps even Sun Fo himself, will get a caning. Here you see two Kuomintangites at loggerheads, Sun Fo and Chiang Kai-shek.

A third Kuomintangite has come forward, saying, "No, in my opinion, the responsibility should be borne entirely by the Kuomintang." His name is Li Tsung-jen. On January 22, 1949, Li Tsung-jen issued a statement in his capacity as "acting president". Regarding the responsibility for the war, he said:

The three years' civil war that followed the eight years' War of Resistance has not only completely destroyed the country's last hope of recovery after the victory in the War of Resistance but has also spread ruin everywhere north and south of the Yellow River, devastating innumerable farmsteads and

houses, killing and wounding thousands upon thousands of innocent people, breaking up countless families and causing people everywhere to lament in hunger and cold. Such a terrible holocaust is really without parallel in the history of civil wars in our country.

Here Li Tsung-jen makes a statement but names no names; he fixes the responsibility neither on the Kuomintang, nor on the Communist Party, nor on any other quarter; yet he has stated one fact, that this "terrible holocaust" has occurred in no other place than "north and south of the Yellow River". Wherefore, let us examine who caused this "terrible holocaust" in the area from the Yellow River south to the Yangtse River and north to the Sungari River. Could it have been caused by the people and the people's army there, fighting among themselves? Since Li Tsung-jen was once Chief of Chiang Kai-shek's Peiping Headquarters and since the troops of his Kwangsi clique together with Chiang's troops once fought into the Yi-Meng mountain area in Shantung Province,<sup>[2]</sup> he has reliable information about where and how this "holocaust" took place. If there is nothing else good about Li Tsung-jen, at least it is good that he has made this one honest statement. What is more, instead of speaking about "putting down the rebellion" or "suppressing the bandits", he calls the war a "civil war", and this, for the Kuomintang, may be said to be quite novel.

Following his own logic, Li Tsung-jen declared in the same statement that "the Government is willing to start negotiations immediately on the basis of the eight terms proposed by the Communist Party of China". Li Tsung-jen knows that the first of the eight terms is the punishment of war criminals and that his own honourable name is among them. That the war criminals should be punished is a logical conclusion from the "holocaust". For this reason the Kuomintang die-hards are even now muttering complaints against Li Tsung-jen, saying that "the eight terms Mao Tse-tung put forward in his January 14 statement would ruin the nation, and the Government should not have accepted them".

There are reasons why the die-hards can only mutter and dare not speak out openly. Before Chiang Kai-shek "retired", the diehards had thought of rejecting our eight terms, but then Chiang Kai-shek on second thoughts decided not to do so, probably because he considered that to reject them would leave no way out; this was the state of affairs on January 19. On that morning, Chang Chun-mai <sup>[3]</sup> upon his return to Shanghai from Nanking said that "the Government may issue another statement soon in reply to the eight terms put forward by the Communist Party of China", whereupon the Central News Agency sent a service message the same evening, saying:

Add the following note to the Shanghai dispatch on Chang Chun-mai's statement that has just come through. As regards his assertion that the Government will soon issue another statement, a Central News Agency correspondent has just learned from the quarters concerned that the Government has no intention of making another statement.

In the January 21 statement on his "retirement", Chiang Kai-shek said not a single word in criticism of the eight terms and even revoked his own five terms, changing them into "attaining peace on the principle that the integrity of territory and sovereignty is maintained, that the historic culture and social order are not destroyed and that the people's livelihood and right to freedom are safeguarded". He no longer dared raise such matters as the constitution, the legally constituted authority or the army. That is why on January 22 Li Tsung-jen dared to accept the eight terms of the Communist Party of China as the basis for negotiations and why the Kuomintang die-hards dared not openly reject them, but could only mutter that "the Government should not have accepted them".

Did Sun Fo consistently maintain his policy of "equalization of landownership"? No. After he "moved the Government to Canton" on February 5, 1949, he made a speech on February 7 about the question of war responsibility, saying:

In the last six months the spread of the disaster of war has brought about serious changes in the situation and inflicted untold suffering on the people. All this has its origin in past mistakes, failures and unreasonableness, and today's grave situation is the consequence. We are all convinced that China needs the Three People's Principles. So long as the Three People's Principles are not put into effect, China's problems can never be solved. It may be recalled that twenty years ago the *Tsungli* of our party personally entrusted the Three People's Principles to our party as his legacy in the hope that they would be put into effect step by step. If they had been put into effect, the situation would never have developed into such a hopeless mess.

People will please note that here the president of the Executive Yuan of the Kuomintang government is not apportioning responsibility for the war equally among the various parties and all his fellow-countrymen but is putting it on the Kuomintang itself. It makes people feel exceedingly good to see Sun Fo applying the cane to the backside of the Kuomintang alone. What about the Communist Party? President Sun says:

We can see that the Communist Party of China has been able to lure and dupe the people merely by appealing for the equalization of landownership, which is one part of the Three People's Principles, the Principle of the People's Livelihood. We ought to feel deeply ashamed, sharpen our vigilance and examine afresh our past mistakes.

Thank you, dear President! Although the Communist Party is still charged with the crime of "luring and duping the people", at least it is innocent of other horrible crimes and hence escapes a caning and is let off with its head and its backside unscathed.

Nor is President Sun lovable for this reason alone. In the same speech, he says:

The spread of Communist influence today is a result of our failure to put into effect the principles we believe in. Our party's greatest mistake in the past was that certain members worshipped force too

much and scrambled for power among themselves, thus giving the enemy opportunities to sow dissension in our ranks. The conclusion of the eight years' War of Resistance should have been the occasion for realizing the country's peaceful unification, an opportunity of a thousand years, and originally the Government had a plan of settling domestic disputes by political means, but unfortunately it was not carried out. After years of war and chaos the people urgently needed rehabilitation. The renewal of armed conflict made life impossible for the people, and the suffering was great, it also lowered the morale of the troops and caused repeated military setbacks. In deference to the feelings of the people and because he realized that military means had failed to solve the problem, President Chiang issued a New Year's Day message calling for peace.

Good! Here this war criminal Sun Fo has made a voluntary confession, and a frank and truthful one too, although he has not been arrested or caned. Who was it who worshipped force, launched the war and sued for peace only after military means had failed to solve the problem? None other than the Kuomintang, none other than Chiang Kai-shek himself. President Sun is very precise in his choice of words when he says that "certain members" of his party worshipped force too much. This conforms with the demand of the Communist Party of China that only a certain number of Kuomintang members be punished and branded as war criminals, but no more than this number, and of course not its entire membership.

So we have no dispute with Sun Fo over the number. We differ with him as to the conclusion to be drawn. We hold that "certain members" of the Kuomintang must be punished as war criminals because they "worshipped force" and caused the "renewal of armed conflict", which "made life impossible for the people". But Sun Fo does not agree. He says:

In delaying the appointment of its delegation and constantly stalling for time, the Communist Party has shown that it also worships force, believes it has now become full-fledged and can conquer the whole country by force, it therefore refuses to cease hostilities as a first step. Its motive is all too clear. I hereby propose in all seriousness that in order to obtain lasting peace negotiations should be conducted by the two parties on an equal footing and that the terms should be fair and reasonable and acceptable to the people of the whole country.

From this you can see that President Sun is not quite so lovable. He seems to think that the punishment of war criminals is not a fair and reasonable term. On the question of war criminals, his words reveal an attitude similar to that of the "Special Directive for Propaganda" issued by the Kuomintang Propaganda Department on February 13, and similarly he only mutters and dares not openly object. He differs sharply from Li Tsung-jen who dares to accept the punishment of war criminals as one of the basic terms for negotiations.

But there is still something lovable about President Sun, for he says that although the Communist Party "also worships force", as shown by two points, "delaying the appointment of its delegation" and "refusing to cease hostilities as a first step", yet it is not like the

Kuomintang, which worshipped force as early as 1946 and unleashed a most cruel war. Well, the Communist Party has "delayed the appointment of its delegation" because making a list of war criminals is an important matter, it must be "acceptable to the people of the whole country" and a list that is too long or too short would be unrealistic and unacceptable to "the people of the whole country" (whose ranks do not include the war criminals and their accomplices). This requires consultation with the democratic parties and people's organizations; it has therefore caused some "stalling", and we were not able to appoint our delegates quickly, thus arousing the displeasure of Sun Fo and his like. But from this, one cannot jump to the conclusion that the Communist Party "also worships force". It is probable that before long the list of war criminals will be published, our delegates named and the negotiations started; and then President Sun will not be able to say that we "worship force".

As for "refusing to cease hostilities as a first step", this is a correct attitude adopted in obedience to President Chiang's New Year's Day message. In that message President Chiang said:

As soon as the Communist Party has a sincere desire for peace and can give definite indications of this, the Government will certainly meet it in all sincerity and be willing to discuss concrete measures for ending hostilities and restoring peace.

On January 19 Sun Fo's Executive Yuan passed a resolution in violation of Chiang Kai-shek's message, saying "first, effect an immediate and unconditional cessation of hostilities, and then, appoint delegates to enter into peace negotiations". On January 21 a Chinese Communist Party spokesman sternly criticized this absurd resolution.<sup>[4]</sup> Curiously enough, the president of the Executive Yuan turned a deaf ear to the criticism and on February 7 again nonsensically said that the Communist Party's "refusal to cease hostilities as a first step" was proof that it "also worships force". Even such a war criminal as Chiang Kai-shek knows that without negotiations it is impossible to cease hostilities and restore peace; on this point Sun Fo is far behind Chiang Kai-shek.

As is generally known, Sun Fo is listed as a war criminal because he has all along supported Chiang Kai-shek in launching and continuing the war. As late as June 22, 1947, he was still saying that a "settlement will finally come, provided militarily we fight to the end" and that "at present peace negotiations are out of the question, and the Government must crush the Communist Party of China or be overthrown by it".<sup>[5]</sup> Sun Fo himself is one of those "certain members" of the Kuomintang who worshipped force. But now he is making irresponsible and carping comments from the side-lines, as if he himself had never worshipped force and bore no responsibility for the failure to carry out the Three People's Principles. This is dishonest. Whether tried according to the law of the state or judged according to the party discipline of the Kuomintang, Sun Fo cannot escape the caning he deserves.

## NOTES

1. A famous slogan of Sun Yat-sen. (See "On New Democracy" Section 6, *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Vol. II.) Here it is used as a pun in ridicule of Sun Fo.
2. This refers to the region of the Yi and Meng Mountains in Shantung Province. It was the 46th Army of the Kwangsi clique which attacked this region jointly with Chiang Kai-shek's troops. This army had been brought from Hainan Island by sea and landed at Tsingtao in October 1946. It was completely wiped out in February 1947 in the Laiwu region of Shantung Province.
3. A reactionary politician, the head of the small reactionary Democratic Socialist Party. See "Greet the New High Tide of the Chinese Revolution", Note 8, p. 126 of this volume and "On New Democracy", Note 9, *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Vol. II.
4. See "Comment by the Spokesman for the Communist Party of China on the Resolution of the Nanking Executive Yuan", pp. 321-23 of this volume.
5. This refers to the remarks made in Nanking on June 22, 1947 by Sun Fo, then vice-president of the Kuomintang government, when he received reporters of the Associated Press, the Kuomintang *Central Daily News* and the *Hsin Min Pao*.